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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2004

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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR TO DRL A/S KRAMER;  
DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR EAP/MLS (BESTIC);  
DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR DRL/SEA

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [LA](#)  
SUBJECT: FOLLOWING UP ON THE ACTIVISTS FOR DEMOCRACY AND  
DISSIDENTS OUTREACH REQUEST

REF: A. SECSTATE 44903  
[1](#)B. 07 STATE 108924

(SBU) Embassy Vientiane takes seriously the need to find ways to move Laos, one of the world's five remaining Communist countries, toward increased respect for human rights and international standards of freedom. The Embassy works to strengthen an emerging but very fragile civil society as this country goes through a transition from its current leaders -- who date from the Indochina War period -- to the next generation. Embassy staff members and I seek opportunities to communicate with the very narrow range of human rights advocates -- most of whom are based abroad -- on issues such as religious freedom and the Lao Government's treatment of its minorities, including the Hmong. Laos has no known internal dissidents other than a very small number of long-term political prisoners and the remnants of the Hmong insurgency. We know of no dissidents from other countries living in exile or seeking asylum here.  
HUSO